

Over 22% of people in Delhi have had virus, study indicates

July 21 2020, by Emily Schmall and Aniruddha Ghosal



Doctors and health workers entertain children at a COVID-19 care center functioning in an indoor stadium in New Delhi, India, Monday, July 20, 2020. (AP Photo/Manish Swarup)

More than one in five people in Delhi have been infected with the coronavirus, according to a study released Tuesday, indicating that most

cases in the Indian capital region have gone undetected.

The National Center for Disease Control tested 21,387 people selected randomly across Delhi, the state that includes New Delhi, and found that 23.48% had antibodies to the virus. Adjusting for [false positives](#) and negatives, it estimated that 22.86% of the [population](#) had been infected by the virus, Dr. Sujeet Kumar Singh, who heads the institute, said in a news conference Tuesday.

Delhi, with a population of 29 million, has officially reported 123,747 cases and 3,663 deaths. The study, however, indicates more than 6.6 million likely cases, with most not identified or tested.

Dr. Jayaprakash Muliyl, an epidemiologist at the Christian Medical College in the southern city of Vellore who is advising the government on virus surveillance, noted that the survey results are an average and the percentage of people infected could be much higher in certain areas, such as slums.

"You need to look at different clusters," he said.

The study was conducted between June 27 and July 10, and Muliyl said the number of infections has likely increased since then.



A street side fruit vendor has his face covered as a precaution against the coronavirus in Kolkata, India, Tuesday, July 21, 2020. With a surge in coronavirus cases in the past few weeks, state governments in India have been ordering focused lockdowns in high-risk areas to slow down the spread of infections. (AP Photo/Bikas Das)



Commuters wearing face masks jostle for a ride on a bus discarding social distancing guidelines in Kolkata, India, Tuesday, July 21, 2020. With a surge in coronavirus cases in the past few weeks, state governments in India have been ordering focused lockdowns in high-risk areas to slow down the spread of infections. (AP Photo/Bikas Das)



Hindu holy men wearing face masks wait to consult doctors at a COVID-19 screening facility inside a government hospital in Jammu, India, Tuesday, July 21, 2020. With a surge in coronavirus cases in the past few weeks, state governments in India have been ordering focused lockdowns in high-risk areas to slow down the spread of infections.(AP Photo/Channi Anand)



People wearing face masks line up to consult doctors at a COVID-19 screening facility inside a government hospital in Jammu, India, Tuesday, July 21, 2020. With a surge in coronavirus cases in the past few weeks, state governments in India have been ordering focused lockdowns in high-risk areas to slow down the spread of infections.(AP Photo/Channi Anand)



An Indian vendor has his face covered as a precaution against the coronavirus as he sells mosquito nets in Jammu, India, Tuesday, July 21, 2020. With a surge in coronavirus cases in the past few weeks, state governments in India have been ordering focused lockdowns in high-risk areas to slow down the spread of infections.(AP Photo/Channi Anand)



A tea seller with a face mask hanging on his chin talks to a customer beside his movable cart as commuters jostle for a ride on a bus discarding social distancing guidelines in Kolkata, India, Tuesday, July 21, 2020. With a surge in coronavirus cases in the past few weeks, state governments in India have been ordering focused lockdowns in high-risk areas to slow down the spread of infections. (AP Photo/Bikas Das)

With more than 1.1 million reported cases, India has the third-highest confirmed caseload in the world after the United States and Brazil. But compared to those two countries and to global averages, the percentage of the population that has died from the virus is significantly lower.

The death toll rose to 28,084 on Tuesday, with the number of recoveries at 724,577.

Experts suspect that many virus deaths, especially among the elderly, are not being picked up in official fatality numbers. Testing is even more limited outside the capital.

Initially, the virus was largely restricted to the country's cities, where populations tend to be younger and there are more hospitals. But worrying surges have been detected in [rural areas](#) with more fragile health systems and in states with older populations.

India's top [medical research](#) body, the Indian Council for Medical Research, has asked states to add more labs and enhance their testing capacity.

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